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Print Media Branch
Alberta Agriculture
7000 - 113 St.
Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6
OR
Alberta Agriculture's district offices
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Reviewed and assisted by:

- Farm Business Management Branch
- Regional Specialists in
  Crop Production
  Livestock
  Farm Economics
  Marketing Economics

Prepared by:

Pauline Jackson
Family Resource Management Specialist
Home Economics Branch
Alberta Agriculture

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INTRODUCTION

Farming is a much more complex and competitive business than it was 30 years ago when it was easier to keep everything in your head. Now even day-to-day decisions are difficult to make without having facts and figures to refer to.

As the need for farm information grows, so does the need for paperwork. Faced with this growing need for up-to-date written information, now may be a good time to take a long, hard look at the kind of record keeping system you have. Keep in mind that "more" is not necessarily better when it comes to record keeping. How the information is organized and how accessible it is, are the most important factors to consider. If you can't find what you're looking for in five minutes or less, it's taking you too long.

So what's the best way to organize bills, receipts, test results, production figures, market forecasts and all the other information you need to keep the farm running smoothly? The answer depends on the nature of the enterprise and the farmer. Many farmers in the same enterprise have different ideas on record keeping. Many have developed their own sophisticated system, complete with computers, that fulfil all their information requirements. Others still keep most of what they know in their heads and the rest in a shoebox. The suggestions outlined in this publication may confirm that the system you have in place is adequate. Or, you may find there are ways you could improve the efficiency of your record keeping system.

RECORD KEEPING SYSTEMS

A record keeping system should satisfy three objectives:

1. The main purpose of the system is to translate, record, digest, display and reproduce information.
   Who needs all this information? First of all, you need information about the efficiency and productivity of your business on which to base business decisions. Lenders need financial statements to assess a farmer's capacity to repay loans. Accountants need detailed records to prepare income tax returns and analyse the business's strengths and weaknesses. Your family needs good records to make personal financial decisions.
2. A farm record keeping system should organize the information you need to comply with government regulations such as income tax, employee benefits, licenses and permits into a readily accessible format.
3. A record keeping system stores both short and long-term information so you can pull it out quickly when needed. Businesses are required by law to keep detailed records of financial activities for several years. Farming is no exception. Many farms also keep production records for a number of years to analyse trends and make forecasts.

DECISION MAKING ON THE FARM

The decison making function is the most important function of a record keeping system. As the return on farm sales diminish, it's important to make the best possible decisions. Analysing past performance may give you a good indication of what will happen in the future. However, the essence of planning your farm's future is asking "What would happen if this change was made?" Answering this question on paper, after a thorough investigation of all the information available, will greatly reduce the risk of making a poor decision. This can best be done in a well organized farm office.

COMMUNICATION

Record keeping and analysis of records is an activity that should be shared. Farm families frequently entrust the record keeping to one spouse, be it husband or wife, whoever is best with figures. This may make sense, but major problems could develop in the event of a crisis. At the very least, both husband and wife should be fully aware of all details regarding wills, insurance, bank accounts and other financial arrangements so that either spouse can cope with financial affairs if necessary. The other members of the family also need to cooperate closely in order to collect and maintain the records in good order. Suggestions for sharing information among the family can be found in the section on farm business meetings.

Decision making should also be shared, and not only with the people directly involved in the farm business. In operating a farm, many farmers become aware that many of the goals they set cannot be met without help from people who have skills and resources the farmer either doesn't have, or never had an interest in developing. For example, many farmers are aware of their limitations in preparing complex income tax returns so they use the services of a qualified accountant. When profits are low, the farmer may want to sit down with his accountant and prepare financial statements to find out where he stands, and look at any immediate action he can take to alleviate the situation. Agricultural economists and consultants, district agriculturists, district home economists and other professionals can also provide support.

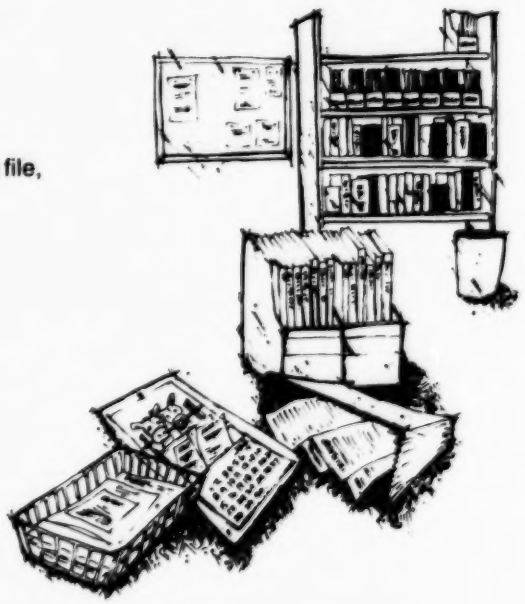
You can benefit the most from the time and money you spend on professional help by developing a good set of records they can review. The balance of this publication outlines how to set up a good record keeping system in a farm office. You'll find it takes a "systems" approach. For each kind of information (current information, business and financial records, physical records, permanent records), you'll find information on how to set up a system and how to make the system work. That way, you won't have to read the publication from cover to cover.

GETTING STARTED

Also, consider this publication a starting point, not as a final answer to all your farm record keeping concerns. Many topics touched on here go well beyond the scope of this publication. Entire books have been written on many subjects. In those cases, you'll be referred to where more detailed information can be found, or to someone who can point you in the right direction. Not only does this avoid duplication of existing sources, but it also ensures you get several different perspectives on the same problem.

Once you get started on establishing or improving your record keeping system, you may find there are some intangible benefits. For example, it's somehow more reassuring to know precisely what you're up against, rather than having to deal with a lot of unknowns. A good record keeping system may not eliminate all the unknowns, but it can minimize them.

CURRENT INFORMATION RECORDS



Set Up A System

1. Temporary storage items - large clips, clipboard, expanding file, pouch file, pouch calendar, file basket.
2. Bulletin board and chalk board.
3. Magazine holders.
4. Bookcase or shelf.
5. Waste basket.

Make The System Work

Information arrives constantly at every farm by mail, deliveries or through your daily activities.

Gathering

As mentioned earlier, the main function of a good record keeping system is to process information. Sorting through all the papers that land on your truck dash, in your pocket or on the kitchen table is the obvious place to start. Here are some suggestions for setting up a good system of collecting information that makes it easier to do something constructive with it later.

1. When making business trips to town, carry your cheque-book in a fold-over clipboard with a pocket on the folding side. Attach a pen and the cheque-book to the clip side. Then as you make your stops, you can jot down details of cash sales and other transactions and put the papers you accumulate in the pocket of the clipboard.
2. Attach a big clip, elastic or envelope to the sun visor of your vehicle. Then attach your papers to the sun visor as you acquire them.
3. Carry a pocket-size calendar to note details of cash transactions, livestock events (births, weaning dates) and field events (herbicide spraying, seeding, etc.)

Sorting

Some farms generate so much paperwork that they require daily attention. Others require only weekly sorting and monthly record keeping. Setting a definite time for record keeping will make it a part of your routine and help you keep up with the paperwork. You may want to set aside a half hour every morning or a few hours in the evening when your children are doing their homework.

When you do get around to sorting, aim to reduce the number of times you handle each piece of paper. Start by sorting all your financial transaction records (bills, invoices, etc.) into one pile. Bundle these together with an elastic band or clip. Then, either put them in a holding file for now or handle them immediately after you've finished sorting. See the section on business and financial records for more information on handling these records.

Put all incoming farm magazines and newspapers into a separate file basket labelled "To Be Read Later", or put them into magazine holders on your book shelf.

Newsletters, market reports, notices, news releases, and frequently used references are best clipped together and kept in a magazine holder on your desk, or hung on a hook on a bulletin board within easy reach of the desk.

Jot file numbers on technical references or production information as you receive them. You may want to read them now or put them in another file for reading during the next week. When you and your family have finished reading, decide which information is worth keeping and throw the rest out.

Machinery manuals can either be stored on a shelf above a work bench in the farm shop or on a bookcase in the farm office—whatever is most convenient for you. Other reference manuals and binders are best kept on a bookcase or shelf close to your desk in the farm office for quick access.

For more suggestions on compiling and using production records and technical references, turn to the section on physical records.

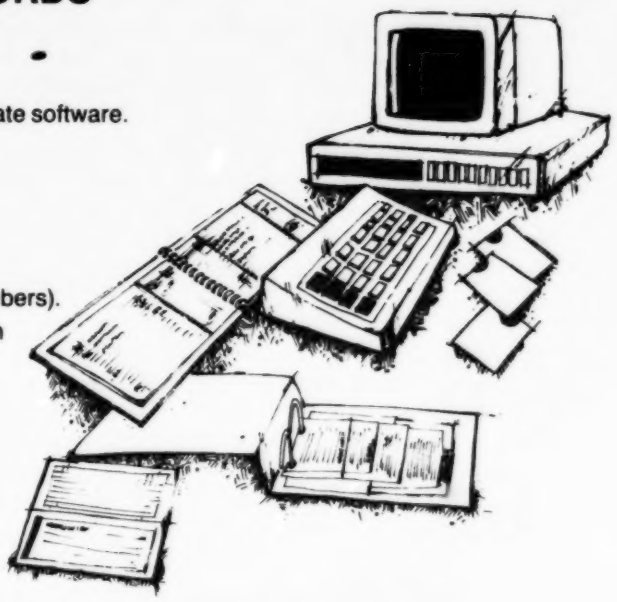
Incoming household papers can be divided into financial, reference and personal material. You'll have to decide whether or not to keep these papers separate from farm business papers. On larger farms and multi-family enterprises, separating farm and family records may be most efficient.

See the appendix of this publication for suggestions on filing household information. For ideas on filing important personal papers, turn to the section on permanent records.

Finally, when you run across junk mail, throw it all out — immediately!

BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

Set Up A System



1) Accounts book or computer and disks and appropriate software.
2) A lock-arch binder divided into two sections:
   1) Cancelled cheques and bank statements.
   2) Income receipts.
3) A lock-arch binder divided into four sections.
   1) Paid invoices (file in same order as cheque numbers).
   2) Receipts for cash purchases (in ziplock bag with itemized statement).
   3) Partially paid invoices (receipts for partial payment stapled to invoices).
   4) Invoices unpaid.
4) Or 12 file folders fastened together in a binder for monthly records.

Make The System Work

Collection and Holding

Have one place in your home for holding all your financial papers. Keeping all your papers in one place ensures you'll have everything you'll need when you do get around to recording. It also reduces the possibility of losing things.

The kind of holding file you use depends on how often you record the transactions and file the papers. The more frequently you update your records, the smaller the pile of paper you'll have to handle. You could use a desk drawer, expandable file, file basket, separate envelope in a binder, or pouch calendar. As you add items to your holding file, jot down any notes or information on the bills, receipts, etc,. that might be needed later.

If for some reason you get behind, keep each month's stack of paper separate. That way, you'll only have to tackle one month's stack of paper at a time.

Make sure everyone involved in farm and/or household management decisions knows where the holding file is. That way, everyone can find all the facts they need to make decisions.

Processing Financial Transactions

Your bank can do a lot of your bookkeeping for you. The following accounting practices ensure that your farm account bank statement provides you with a good deal of the information you need to keep track of your farm business affairs.

1. **Select a bank account that provides monthly statements and cancelled cheques.**
2. **Use a deposit book and deposit all income into the farm account.** Don't take cash out when you make a deposit. Write a separate cheque for cash instead. That way, you'll have a complete record of all the income you receive to match with the income receipts. This establishes an "audit trail" (an easily followed path of where your money went). Also, note on the slip what the deposit was, such as grain sale or family allowance.

   Documenting all deposits will also help you prove to Revenue Canada that any personal gifts or loans were not taxable farm income.

   Receipts for all income received and deposit slips are best filed in chronological order in the front section of the lock-arch binder for banking documents.
3. **Write cheques for all farm expenses and withdrawals.**

   Writing cheques for all expenses ensures that none are forgotten when doing your income tax and gives you a complete record of all your expenditures.

When you receive invoices for the current accounting period, sort them into two piles: the ones you'll pay in full and the ones you'll make a partial payment on. Then start writing your cheques.

Fill out the stub of each cheque with the date, amount, who the cheque is made out to and what expense the cheque covers. Also, number your cheques and write this number on the matching invoice. Paid invoices can then be filed in the same order as the cheque numbers in the lock-arch binder for invoices. Partially paid invoices can be filed in a separate section of the same lock-arch binder. This speeds up cross-referencing between your invoices and your cancelled cheques to make sure all bills have been paid.

Any unpaid invoices can be kept in the front section of the lock-arch binder for invoices, or in your holding file, whichever you prefer. Or, you could pin unpaid invoices on a bulletin board near your desk so you don't forget about them.

4. **Reconcile, Record, Cross-Reference**

If all your expenses are paid by cheque, there are two ways of recording these transactions into your record keeping system.

A. You could wait until the end of the month to record your transactions. In that case, the first thing you should do is reconcile your bank statement with your cheque register (your record of transactions with the bank).

i. Determine the ending balance on the bank statement.

ii. Add deposits you made but which haven't shown up on the bank statement yet.

iii. Deduct cheques which you wrote but which the bank hasn't processed yet.

The number you get is your ADJUSTED BANK BALANCE. Then:

i. Use your cheque register to determine the bank balance according to your records.

ii. Subtract any credits, such as service charges, the bank has made from your account as well as any cheques received that the bank has declared N.S.F.

iii. Add any interest allowed by the financial institutions.

The number you get is your ADJUSTED CHEQUE REGISTER BALANCE, which should be the same as your adjusted bank balance. If there's a discrepancy, there's a mistake somewhere — either in your records or the bank statement. In either case, contact your bank. Most banks consider the statement to be correct if they don't hear from you in 30 days.

Now that you know your records agree with the bank's, you can record your financial transactions from your bank statement into your account book.

B. If you record transactions as they occur, the process is a little different. When you get your bank statement, reconcile it with your cheque register as before. Then cross-reference it with your cheque register as before. Then cross-reference the records with your account book. You may find that a few dates are different, or a few transactions missing. In that case, you'll have to make adjustments to your account book.

(NOTE: You can also record directly form the original bills or receipt documents (cheques, pay stubs, etc.) directly out of the holding file. This creates a set of records separate from the bank statement. That way, you can check the accuracy of the bank statement and reduce the possibility of transactions going unrecorded.)

If, for some reason, you don't get around to recording for three or four months, cross-reference at least once a month between your cheque register and your bank statement. That way, you can be sure that what you think your bank balance is, and what the bank says it is, are the same.

Also, try to keep each month's stack of paper separate so when you do sit down to record, you don't have to sort through four months of paper to do one month of paperwork.

Transactions can be recorded in either an account book set up to determine net cash income for tax purposes, or in a ledger book in which you use headings that apply to your enterprise. Seek the advice of your accountant to find a system that best suits your needs.

The farm business management branch of Alberta Agriculture has a number of publications on account book systems and computerized accounting systems that you can consult. These publications are available from Alberta Agriculture district offices. Contact your district home economist for more information.

5. **Set up a system for keeping track of cash purchases.** These transactions are usually small and invoices for them are easily misplaced. Write details of the expense on the back of the invoice or sales slip, then clip these invoices together and put them in your holding file. At the end of each recording period (such as a

month), total these cash receipts. Staple the receipts together and file these in the lock-arch binder for invoices. Small receipts can be put in an envelope or zip-lock bag, then punched with two holes.

If you paid for a farm expense with cash out of your pocket, keep a record of this payment. Then at the end of the month, reimburse yourself for the purchase with a cheque from the farm account. The expense can then be entered in your account book.

Cash purchases for the farm business may be hard to keep track of, but it's important that you document as many as possible for accuracy of your own accounts and to maximize your deductions on your income tax return. Revenue Canada may need proof that these deductions are legitimate.

6. **Keep farm and personal bank accounts separate.**

Keeping separate accounts makes record keeping easier because you don't have to sift through all your family records to find records of business transactions. Also, farm accounting entries average between 20 and 30 per month, while family living expenditures have to be entered between 60 and 70 times per month. It's a lot easier to balance the farm account book at the end of the month if you only have farm entries to double check. The same is true for records of family living expenditures. In addition, financial business records must be kept for at least six years for tax purposes. (For a run-down on what to keep, see Revenue Canada information circular 78-10R: Books and Records Retention/Destruction (Jan. 17, 1983.) These permanent records are a lot easier to arrange and store if they include only farm business records. Finally, keeping farm and personal accounts separate helps keep your family's personal spending habits private.

Separate accounts may mean carrying two cheque-books at times and occasionally, you may need to reimburse the family account for farm purchases and vice-versa. However, practice and common sense should eliminate any problems within a few months.

7. **Establish a monthly family living allowance.**

Many farm families report greater satisfaction with the way they handle their financial affairs after they've established a monthly family living allowance. A set amount is easier to plan into overall farm finances and provides greater control of family living expenditures. A separate record of these expenditures also gives a valid picture of the actual costs of family living.

Your records can be used to work out ahead of time how much you can reasonably expect to spend on family living. Then you simply transfer that amount from a farm account to a family account.

Your farm's cash flow will affect the timing of the transfer. If you receive income somewhat regularly, a monthly transfer from the farm account to a family account makes sense. If however, you receive all your income during one season, one large transfer might be best. Check with your local district home economist for advice on budgeting family living expenses. Also, consult Alberta Agriculture's new financial security fact sheets.

8. **Prepare year-end financial statements.**

Recording, balancing and reconciling all records of your financial transactions gives you the short-term view of your farm business. You get the long-term view by summarizing this information into year-end financial statements.

These statements help you analyse your business so you can make informed decisions about it. For example, a balance sheet may show that your assets more than cover your liabilities in the long run, indicating that you are solvent. However, in the short run (the next 12 months), you may not have enough current assets (assets that can be turned into cash in a year) to pay all current debts (debts falling due within a year), indicating you lack liquidity. As a result, you may want to look at debt consolidation to reduce current debts.

Also financial statements can be compared with previous years to determine whether or not your equity is increasing or whether the value of the business is increasing or decreasing.

A. Balance Sheet

You could think of a balance sheet as a "financial snapshot" of your business at a point in time, which helps you:

1. Determine what you own (assets) and what you owe (liabilities).
2. Determine what amount of equity you have in the business.
   TOTAL ASSETS – TOTAL LIABILITIES = OWNER'S EQUITY

3. Determine the solvency of the business which is measured by net capital ratio:

$$\text{NET CAPITAL RATIO} = \frac{\text{TOTAL ASSETS}}{\text{TOTAL LIABILITIES}}$$

4. Determine the liquidity of the business (its ability to meet current obligations) which is measured by current ratio:

$$\text{CURRENT RATIO} = \frac{\text{CURRENT ASSETS}}{\text{CURRENT LIABILITIES}}$$

*Current assets are those which can be turned into cash within the next 12 months to pay current liabilities, i.e., those coming **due** within the next 12 months.

5. Determine how much the business is worth based on original cost of the assets, not present market value.

B. Income/Expense Statement

An income/expense statement, which shows the annual earnings and expenses of your farm business, can be used to determine:

1. Your actual cash operating income and expense (which can be used for income tax purposes).
2. A matching of income and expenses into an accrual income statment which shows what actually occurred over the accounting period.
3. How much debt your farm can service.

C. Cash Flow Forecast

A cash flow forecast provides a complete forecast of all farm and non-farm cash inflows (farm cash income, capital sales) and outflows (capital purchases, loan payments) for the next year. Among other things this statement shows you:

1. How much credit you'll need to operate.
2. When loans can be repaid from surplus cash.
3. The effects of capital purchases or sales on cash flow.
4. The effects of staging the marketing of produce.

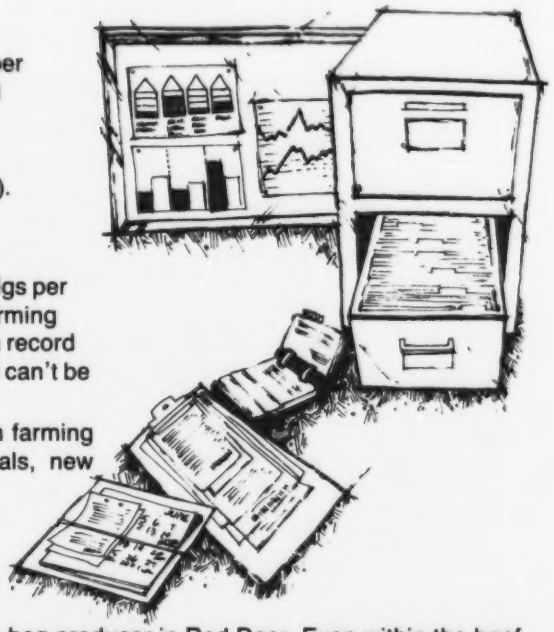
D. Cash Summary

1. How all your cash was used during the year.

For detailed information on preparing all year-end financial statements, contact an Alberta Agriculture district office and ask for the Farm Financial Fitness Package.

PHYSICAL RECORDS

Set Up A System



"On-site" record keeping systems (includes clipboard, paper and pen, pegboard and pins, rotary file, detailed cards, dials and others).

Filing system for farm enterprise information.

Filing cabinet or other storage system (computer and disks).

Make the System Work

Production records give you current production results (pigs per litter, bushels per acre) and how these are affected by various farming practices, e.g., different fertilizer application rates. Also, you can record items such as weather, i.e., rain amounts and dates, frost, which can't be controlled but which affect your management.

Technical references keep you up-to-date on changes in farming practices and new technology in farming e.g., new chemicals, new machinery, recent research results.

Because of their great differences it's not possible to describe a single physical record keeping system suitable for all Alberta farmers. What matters to dryland farmers in Hanna is irrelevant to the needs of an irrigation farmer in Taber, and the Peace River dairy farmer has quite different needs than the hog producer in Red Deer. Even within the beef industry there are feedlots and breeding herds which have special record keeping system needs. Climate and resource restraints also influence choices and therefore the need for information on which decisions can be based.

However, the importance of seasonal and day-to-day decisions is crucial to the economic well-being of any farm no matter what kind of enterprise. Developing least cost rations for livestock, choosing the best variety of grains to grow, applying the optimum amount of fertilizer and using the correct pesticide for infestations and climatic conditions are all important decisions that require accurate information. A good set of physical records is good insurance against poor decisions.

Livestock Records

Many different sections of the livestock industry have developed detailed physical record systems that aid in the day to day monitoring and overall management for the enterprise. For example, dairy herd production results are very detailed and taken at each milking. A dairyman can use these figures to find out the milk production from each cow, the average production per cow in his herd, the average sales per cow and the average feed costs per cow. The dairyman will also have records of the breeding cycle of each cow in the herd.

The form of physical records varies: it may be on cards, it may be pegs on a board, stickers on a dial or a diary. It's important to store this information in a place where everyone involved can have access to it. It's also important for everyone involved to have a complete understanding of the system and how to interpret it.

Specific livestock record systems are available from several sources. Various livestock breed associations offer record systems to producers. The Record of Performance (ROP) systems are a joint federal-provincial sponsored project and available for beef, dairy, sheep and swine producers. Alberta Agriculture has also developed livestock management record systems for beef, dairy and swine. Other privately developed computerized systems are available from several sources. For more information contact an Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist or write to the Beef Cattle and Sheep Branch, J. G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6. District agriculturists can refer you to an agricultural specialist who is familiar with the computerized systems for each type of livestock. Ask for the publication, **How To Select Physical Record Keeping Software for Your Farm Computer,** Agdex 818-26.

An overview of the physical records systems available from private sources can be found in Alberta Agriculture's publication, **A Guide to Physical Record Keeping Systems for Alberta Farmers,** Agdex 818-5. A sample of how a file system may be used by two different beef producers is included in the appendix.

Field Records

Field crop information requirements vary from farm to farm. Generally, you require a yearly listing of the crops, seeding rates, fertilizer application rates, sprays, application rates, crop yields and records of crop residue left in the field. The pattern of crop rotation or summerfallowing should also be compiled each year. Field records are most useful when compared to actual weather conditions. Use field records to help with future crop planning. The records should show what actually happened rather than what was intended to take place.

It's best to record field applications immediately after each application. There are many pocket-size record books available from farm suppliers and field representatives. Field summary sheets can also be photocopied from pages 104 and 105 in the **Guide to Physical Record Keeping Systems for Alberta Farmers,** Agdex 818-5 available from Alberta Agriculture district offices. Sample field record sheets are included in the appendix. These summary sheets can all be kept on a clipboard in the work area or can be pinned beside the farm field map on the bulletin board in the farm office.

Technical References

Many reports on new farming practices and recent developments in agricultural technology can be found in industry newsletters, bulletins, newspapers, research reports, government publications and farm conference proceedings.

These technical references should be filed with production records. For example, you may want to compare your production levels with those of previous years. If your results are above average, you might want to determine what's giving you the edge. On the other hand, if you're short of the average, you'll want to compare specific practices to find the cause and to find a way to increase production. The reason for these differences may be found in the technical details of your reference files.

Sample filing systems for production records and technical references are listed in the appendix. These range from a simple alphabetical file system to a detailed filing system developed specifically for agriculture.

Using Production Records In Decision Making

The whole point of keeping production records is to provide specific information. But the information itself won't make you a top-notch manager. That information must be used to make the best possible decisions for your enterprise. That means you have to be able to analyse the information you gather to find out what it really means.

Putting some of your physical records into visual form may increase your ability to analyse results. Here are some visual aids that farmers find useful in monitoring production.

1. **Farm Maps** A farm map can have many uses. For example, you can color-code your field maps for next year's cropping or grazing plans. Or, you can record the yields of each field on the map.

2. **Transfer Results to a Graph.** Watching trends develop on a graph enables you to detect early when something is going wrong or going very well. Recording actual results is often all that's required, but a graph that shows only the changes from year to year tends to be more revealing.

Yearly Culling

Setting up a good physical records system is only half the battle. The other half is keeping your information up-to-date. Cull your files annually. You may want to keep key yearly results in a summarized form in one ongoing file. Move other historic records into permanent storage. Throw out all outdated and otherwise useless information and references.

Making Decisions

Once you've collected your production information, you could compare results from year to year. The comparisons can then be used to make a host of production decisions: whether or not to change your methods, the nature of your enterprise or to change your enterprise altogether.

PERMANENT RECORDS

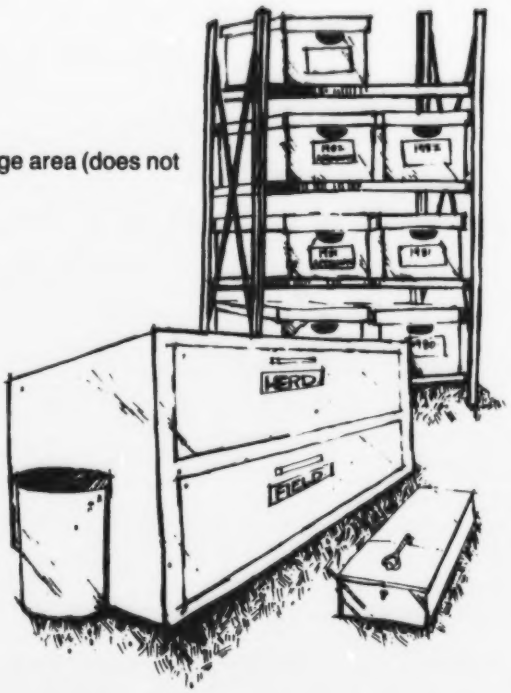
Set Up A System

On Farm:

- For current use - storage boxes or a filing cabinet.
- Inactive records that are not in use - storage boxes in a storage area (does not have to be the office).
- Waste paper basket.

Off Farm:

- Safety deposit box.



Make The System Work

Before you decide to keep certain information in your records, it's important to understand why you're keeping it. The reason for keeping permanent records is usually one of the following:

1. Current use in day-to-day operating or long-term management decisions.
2. Tax purposes.
3. Legal reasons are often interrelated with the other reasons, e.g., evidence of a transaction used to substantiate a claim.
4. To look at long-term trends, analyse results, pinpoint changes.

The reasons for not keeping records usually have a lot to do with cost and storage space. In a typical office, one-third of the information can be thrown out, one-third moved to inactive storage space and the other third kept close at hand for day-to-day decision making. The equipment you need for keeping permanent records doesn't have to cost a lot. For example, apple boxes make great file boxes; they can be picked up for free from your local grocer.

Streamlining permanent files enables you to find information faster. Sort out the possible additions to your permanent records and decide where everything should go.

First of all, important personal papers, such as proof-of-ownership papers, income tax records, insurance policies, estate plans, wills or anything else of lasting value should be photocopied and the originals stored in a safety deposit box at your bank. Most banks rent safety deposit boxes. Yearly rental fees vary with the size of the box and can be claimed as a business expense on your income tax return.

Meanwhile, keep the photocopies at home so you won't have to drive all the way out to the bank and haul out the safety deposit box whenever you need to review an important document.

Review and update the contents of these important papers regularly. For example, inventories should be updated every year, and your will should be revised about every two years or when there is significant changes in legislation or your family situation. Also keep a list at home of what is in the safety deposit box, e.g., bonds, term deposit agreements. Don't forget to cull and update the material in your safety deposit box.

The following table may help you decide where to keep important papers.

WHERE TO KEEP IMPORTANT PAPERS

Item	Carry with you	Current records & reference file	Store in permanent file	Safety deposit box
Account book		X	X	
Bank records	X	X		
Bills of sale				X
Birth certificate	X			X
Blood type card	X			
Burial wishes		X		X
Business agreements		X	X	X
Cancelled cheques		X	X	
Citizenship papers			X	
Credit cards	X			
Driver's license	X			
Education records		X		
Employment records		X		
Financial plan		X		
Guarantees, warranties		X		
Health records		X		
Installment payments schedule		X		
Instruction books		X		
Insurance policies		X		
Inventories		X		X
Marriage and divorce records				X
Net worth statement		X		
Our estate checklist*		X		X
Passport				X
Real estate papers (titles deeds, mortgages)				X
Receipts and bills		X	X	
Special farm records (breeding, registration, etc.)		X	X	
Social insurance cards	X			
Stock certificates, bonds, other investments				X
Tax returns and records		X		
Will a) original b) copy		X		X

* or with executor

A Guide To Storage of Long-Term Filing

Long-term filing can be handled in a number of different ways. After culling your files in January, the files you decide to keep can either be left where you found them, or transferred to a large envelope. The envelope can then be stored in a box or on a shelf with similar material. Or, it can be transferred to a separate but similar filing cabinet for old records.

Pay attention to details when you transfer old files from filing cabinets to file boxes. You may still need to find them quickly someday. A tidy heap or boxful of papers won't do.

When you remove financial records from lock-arch binders, run a string through the holes punched in the paper. Then stack each bundle on a desk and tie it securely. These bundles can then be stored in file boxes, labelled with the name and date of the contents.

Leave a couple of inches of space at the top of each box. That way, papers won't spill out as you're digging through the box.

Stack these boxes in order, in some unused area such as in a corner of the basement. Make sure however, that the boxes are safe from mice and water damage.

You might consider buying metal shelving for these file boxes if you think the extra costs are worth the convenience of an orderly arrangement.

RECORD KEEPING AND DECISION MAKING

Keeping a complete set of records won't be helpful if those records never see the light of day after being filed away. They aren't much use to you either if they can't be found quickly.

The easier it is to get to your records, the more likely you'll use them and the easier keeping track of your farm finances will be.

The more often you refer to your records, chances are, the better decisions you'll make. For example, after talking to some of your neighbours you get the feeling you're not getting the kind of production you should be. The first step in the problem-solving process is to define the problem. You could consult your production records to find out how you've been going about your business lately. You may want to review for instance, what inputs you've been using and how much of each. Your financial records will tell you what these input costs are and what kind of a return you're getting on your investment.

Then you can compare these figures with industry averages that you can find in technical references and/or farm periodicals. That way, you'll find out where the discrepancies are and what specific practices you need to change to bring your production back up to satisfactory levels.

Once the problem is defined, you could turn to your technical references for a list of possible alternatives. Even if some of the solutions seem completely wrong for your operation, don't dismiss any at this point. The idea of brainstorming is to come up with as many solutions as possible.

When you've got a list of alternatives, assess them to find out how realistic each one is. Your financial records, production records and technical references will give you most of the facts and figures you need. You could also consult a district agriculturist, your accountant and/or a farm specialist for advice and additional information.

Now you're ready to choose a solution. Armed with the facts and figures you've gathered from your research, you've got some concrete evidence on which to base a decision.

With facts and figures on hand it's easier to proceed to the next step -implementing your decision. Having considered the alternatives, and being aware of possible outcomes, you know what you're up against. As a result, the problem is less intimidating.

Finally, you can use your record keeping system to keep track of the results of implementing your decision. You can compare predictions with results and make adjustments in mid-stream if necessary.

Most importantly, you'll have a written record of what led to your problem, how you solved it and how to keep it from happening again.

Contact your Alberta Agriculture district office in your area for more information on family farm management courses being held in district, regional and provincial locations.

Communication

Communication is essential for successful farm management. It's all too easy to leave people short of information when you are busy. However, communication breakdowns cause many of the problems on the farm. What's worse, correcting these problems usually takes a great deal more time than would be needed to share the information in the first place.

For communication to be effective, there are a number of requirements.

1. There should be an ongoing system for sharing information among everyone involved in the farm business. A farm business meeting is one method of sharing information on a family farm.
2. Information must be understood by everyone. The more specific the information is, the easier it is to understand. There's a strong possibility that the listener will miss the point of a long-winded, roundabout report. You need to be comprehensive, yet concise when delivering information.
3. The frequency and speed of communication depends on the urgency of the situation. Sometimes you need to inform everyone immediately about some news that requires prompt action or decisions. Other times, information can be left and dealt with at the next regular business meeting.
4. A summary of decisions made and activities undertaken should be written down. A written record of all important communications should also be kept. Some families keep a daily journal or diary. This record should be available as a reference and a reminder to everyone of their responsibilities.

   Generally communication between people takes the following form.

   1. Face-to-face meetings
      - discussion follows
   2. Leaving messages in farm office
      - notes on telephone or bulletin board
      - chalk board and chalk
      - note in lunch box
   3. Sending/recieving messages
      - radio networks, private or CB
      - telephone system beeper, extension hookups, answering machines
      - computer network
      - closed circuit TV of barn or feedlot
      - photocopiers

No matter what method you use to communicate, remember any device you use, from a scribbled note to a computer link, is connecting you with another person. That person deserves the same consideration you would give them if they were standing in your office. For more detailed information ask your district home economist for the publication **Communication Tool Kit,** Homedex 951.

Farm Business Meetings

A farm business meeting can provide an opportunity for the kind of frank communication that's needed to run a busy farm. It gives you a chance to share your successes, sort out problems and make plans.

Everyone involved in the farm business should meet at least once a week to review the past week and plan the coming week's activities. A meeting doesn't have to be formal or long — sometimes, half an hour will do. At least once a month schedule a longer meeting to take a look at finances, new information and future plans. By including everyone in the meeting, you'll be giving your children the opportunity to learn the skills they'll need to manage a farm of their own. When they see what factors are considered and how decisions are made, they'll have a better understanding of the risks and rewards of farming.

Not only do you need to consider who should be involved in making decisions but you also need to determine who should be informed about a decision. Anyone who will be affected by a decision (such as lenders, suppliers or buyers), or be required to support it, should be informed of the decision.

The nature of a farm business meeting will vary from farm to farm, but all effective meetings generally have the following characteristics:

1. After the meeting, everyone knows what needs to be done and who is responsible.
2. The meeting facilitates planning by:
   a) delegating the task of information gathering.
   b) analysing the information collected.
3. Everyone involved learns something about running the farm during the meeting.
4. The meeting provides a decision-making and problem-solving process.

   The success of a farm business meeting can be enhanced by having:

   1. A chairman who:
      a) has the ability to organize an agenda.
      b) includes everyone, but sets reasonable limits to the discussion.
      c) can handle conflict.
      d) recognizes and develops individual strengths.
      e) is able to define and assign tasks.
   2. Members who:
      a) are on time.
      b) come prepared with research, questions and concerns.
      c) are good listeners.
      d) think before they speak.
      e) keep personalities out of the discussion.
      f) don't create distractions.
      g) accept the group consensus and support it.
   3. An agenda that:
      a) indicates what will be discussed.
      b) provides order.
      c) suggests time limits.
   4. A location where:
      a) everyone feels equally important, i.e., neutral ground.
      b) there are no interruptions.

Most of all, the success of a farm business meeting depends on having something to talk about. **Never** hold a meeting when there's nothing to discuss. On the other hand don't try to solve all the problems in one meeting. Sample agenda items follows:

SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR FARM BUSINESS MEETING

I Financial Situation

Farm:
- cash flow projections
- actual receipts and expenditures
- adjustments needed
- adjustments to be made

Family:
- living allowance
- surplus or shortfall
- adjustments needed
- adjustments to be made

Books open to all. Discuss any problems with record keeping such as lost receipts, cash purchases, incomplete stubs.

II Operations

Farm: overview – on top of things/behind in work

production – looks good/looks bad

work to do – who will look after:
- field work
- livestock
- machinery/equipment maintenance
- building/property maintenance
- other seasonal chores

problems
- switching chores
- different methods
- different work routines
- different standards of work, what is to be done, vs. how it is to be done
- authority/responsibility for decisions

III Family
- activities
- commitments
- community commitments
- other

IV New Information
- report on grain marketing seminar, marketing outlook
- auction mart sales and purchases
- test results
- newsletters, etc.

V. Planning

Farm: report from person asked to gather information on:
- purchase of machinery
- cropping plans
- change in marketing strategy
- business arrangements (estate plans, wills, investments)

Family:
- activities
- further education

A successful farm business meeting needs not only a good agenda, but members who are ready to cooperate. Cooperation does NOT mean:

1. using sarcasm or name calling
2. holding grudges
3. stubborness
4. expecting others to do things **your** way

Cooperation means:

1. recognizing conflicts and being willing to face them
2. listening carefully to the other person
3. selecting a good time to discuss a conflict (not when you're tired or upset)
4. defining the problem in specific terms
5. identifying **your** contributions to the problem and taking responsibility for them
6. identifying alternate solutions (brainstorming)
7. deciding on a mutually-acceptable solution (compromising)

Leaving conflicts unresolved can not only harm business relationships, but especially in the case of a husband-wife partnership, poison a personal relationship as well. It's best to deal with problems as quickly as possible. Seek outside assistance if you cannot resolve a conflict on your own.

SITING AND DESIGN OF FARM OFFICE

Many books have been written on office design and organization. However, only farmers who build large, sophisticated office systems can use this material.

This section deals with the majority of farms where the "office" if it exists at all, is either a small room in the farm home, or a shared space in the kitchen, dining room or living room. This section also describes as many physical features of a farm office as possible. You may not even need to incorporate half of them to satisfy your information requirements, but you'll be aware of the possibilities if you decide to expand your office later.

One reason many farmers use for not building a farm office is cost. But when you consider the investment you have in land, buildings and machinery, the amount of money required to set up a farm office to manage that investment is relatively small. The costs of building and equipping a farm office separate from home, may also be declared as an expense at a depreciated rate on your income tax return. However, if the office is in the farm home, then claiming depreciation on a portion of the farm home can negate a portion of the home from the principal residence exemption. It's probably best to do what most farm families do who have their office in their home, only claim operating expenses on their tax return.

The term "farm office" represents more than a roomful of impressive, expensive furnishings. It refers to a record keeping system that allows you to monitor and manage your farm business. The essentials are a working surface, a few storage items for current information, a filing system for financial and physical records, a storage area (such as an out-of-the way closet or space in the basement) for permanent records and a wastebasket. A few used apple boxes for filing and storage, and a kitchen table for a working surface is probably adequate for some farmers. But the money saved in materials may not make up for the inconvenience of having to pack and unpack every time record keeping needs to be done.

The location of a farm office can also make a difference in its use. The best location for a farm office is where communication can most easily take place. That means the farm office has to be accessible at any hour of the day or night. Easy access to the outdoors (a separate entrance from that of the home, for example) also makes it handy to quickly check on something that's keeping you awake at night. If siting allows, it's also convenient to have a view of the yard to see who's coming and going. However, there may not always be a lot of choice in where to locate an office. In such cases, look at the space available and determine how it can be used most efficiently. For example, consider if a room already devoted to another task can be used.

LOCATE A FARM OFFICE CLOSE TO THE ENTRY.

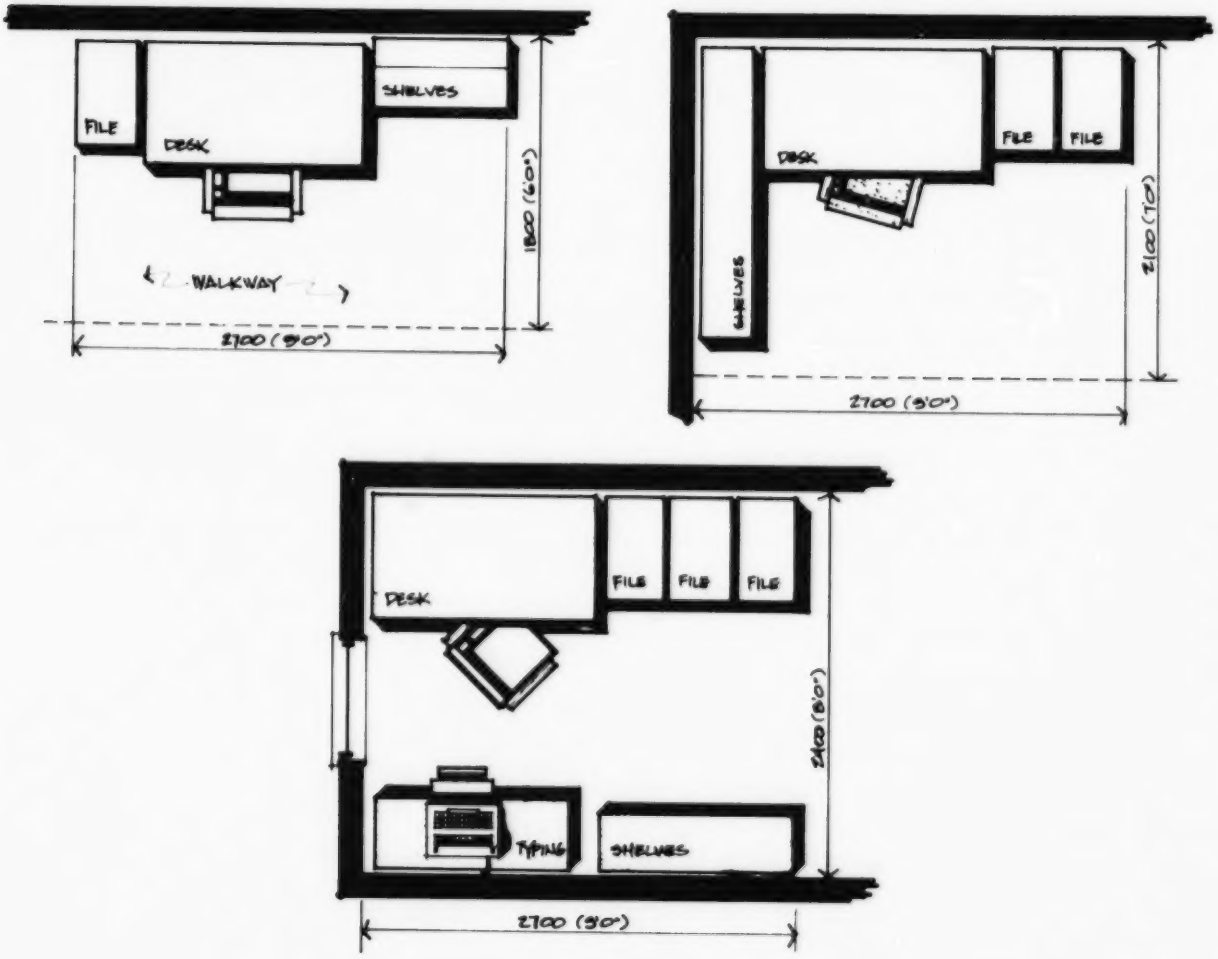
Farm Home Plans courtesy of Housing Specialist, Engineering Services Branch, Alberta Agriculture.

Think about your work habits. Do you put everything away neatly and require a lot of drawers and cabinets, or do you need more counterspace because you like to spread things out and stack them everywhere? Will you be working in the space alone, or will there be others there helping? Will you want to alternate between record keeping, cooking supper and keeping an eye on the kids? Would you like to keep half an eye on the TV as you work? Some people like to combine activities and need a certain noise level to maintain concentration. Others find it too distracting to have something else going on. These people find it difficult to get back to work after checking on youngsters, or refereeing the latest dispute. Do you like to spend a few minutes reviewing items while supper is cooking, or do you only get into doing paperwork once a week?

Think about the resources you have available. Can you keep your costs down by buying used office equipment and furnishings? Can you build your own or renovate existing furniture? If you're buying new furnishings, have you checked prices at several office supply stores?

Think about the colors that make you feel like getting down to business. According to office designers the best office environments are neutral — offwhite, soft grey and beige.

Also, think about how the office fits in with its surroundings. Many do-it-yourself farm office designs allow you to close off the office area from the rest of the home by pulling shut louvered doors or double wood panels. That way you can separate business and family activities. Other plans are designed to blend into a wall storage unit through efficient use of shelving, a pullout work surface and good use of color and building materials. (see illustration below) Although these designs may be more expensive, the use of a small space and overall compatibility with other uses of a room may make them a good investment.



OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHING

Depending on your needs and the resources available, you may want to set up an office with some of the following office items. The comforts listed here are not all needed to manage a farm, but they may be needed to make you feel comfortable. They may give you the privacy and freedom from distraction you need to create a good business image, and allow for separate business and family activities.

a) DESK You can use anything from a door resting on two, two-drawer filing cabinets, to an L-shaped deluxe model office.

b) CHAIR Poor posture while sitting on the job results in fatigue, restlessness and lack of concentration. Find an adjustable chair that supports your back properly.

c) LAMP Invest in good lighting, preferably a lamp with a wide shade that diffuses light over the entire working surface. Right-handed people should place a light source to their left, and left-handed people should place a light source to their right, so neither has to work in their own shadow.

d) FILING CABINET and FILING FOLDERS Legal-size filing cabinets are more flexible than letter-size as they can accommodate 14-inch paper without folding. Whichever you use, get file folders, dividers and a file guide to fit. You may want to use file boxes for storing permanent records. Cardboard boxes from an office supply store or the local food store can be used to store permanent records.

e) WALL STORAGE A couple of shelves within easy reach of your desk can accommodate manuals, binders and permanent records. Other storage space for a computer or typewriters and other large office equipment may be needed.

f) SMALL BOXES/DRAWER DIVIDERS in the desk can accommodate office supplies such as writing paper, envelopes, stamps, pens, pencils, rubber bands, paper clips, memo pads, file labels, scissors, staplers and two-hole punches.

g) FILING BASKETS can be used as a holding file.

h) WASTEBASKET

i) CALCULATOR One with a paper tape will make hunting down mistakes a lot easier.

j) TELEPHONE, TWO-WAY RADIO system

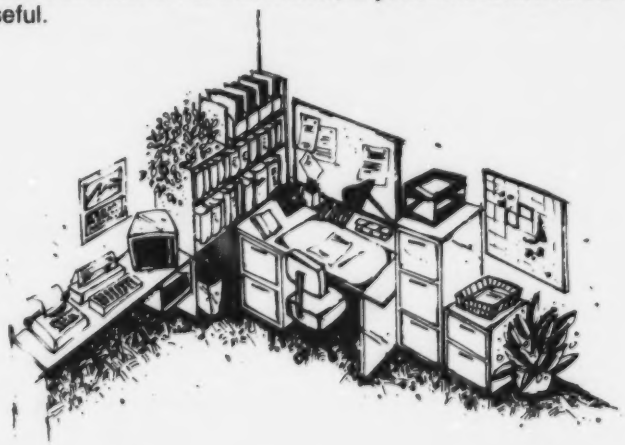
k) BULLETIN BOARD OR BLACKBOARD It's a good idea to have a place where everyone can leave messages for each other, such as a blackboard or bulletin board. You could use both. The blackboard could be reserved for messages only while the bulletin board could be used to post frequently needed references such as price lists, charts, telephone numbers, etc.

l) WALL CALENDAR Marking important dates on a calendar can help you keep to a schedule and remember important deadlines.

m) WALL MAP OF FARM Sometimes it may be more convenient to have suppliers deliver to an outbuilding rather than to the house. If so, the driver may need directions. For that matter, anyone who is new to the farm (such as a new farm wife) could find a map useful.

n) PHOTOCOPIER for duplication.

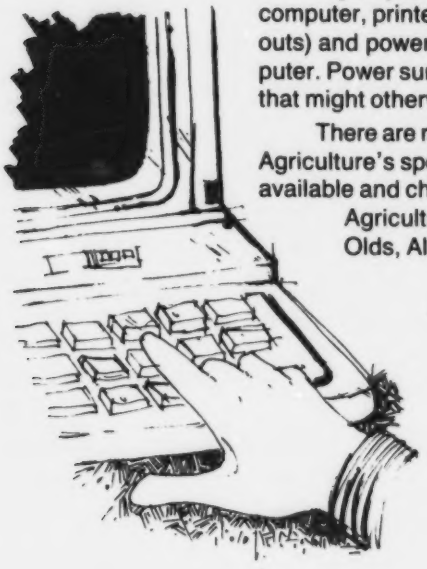
o) TYPEWRITER (or word processing capacity in home computer).



A NOTE ON COMPUTERS

Whether or not a farm office needs a computer is open to debate. Home computers can be a real asset to your business because of their capacity to process information quickly. They are also becoming more affordable. However, some people still find computers difficult to master and/or have difficulty finding appropriate software.

Software is the program that instructs the hardware to produce the required results. Commercial software packages usually consist of a diskette and instruction manual. Hardware is the machinery itself, such as a keyboard, monitor and printer.



If you plan to make a computer part of your farm office, you'll need a table for a computer, printer and phone, storage space for supplies (diskettes, manuals, paper, printouts) and power-surge protection on the electrical outlet that supplies power to the computer. Power surge bars have built-in circuit breakers that cut down on power when surges that might otherwise damage your equipment come through the line.

There are many software packages for very specific farm enterprises available. Alberta Agriculture's specialists can help you sort through the ever-increasing volume of software available and choose the programs most suited to your enterprise. Enquire at an Alberta Agriculture regional office or the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

Alberta Agriculture's publications **Buying Computer Hardware,** Agdex 818-11 and **How To Select the Right Farm Accounting Software for your Microcomputer** Agdex 818-22) can also help you make up your mind. It could also be worthwhile to check the monthly newsletter **Compufarm,** published by Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch.

OFFICE SET-UPS

Arranging all the equipment you use is a matter of setting priorities. Place the things you use most often close to you and the things you don't need very often further away.

zone 1: Areas you can reach without moving your chair. Telephone, telephone book, radio, wastebasket, calculator, office supplies in desk drawer, scratch pads, filing baskets.

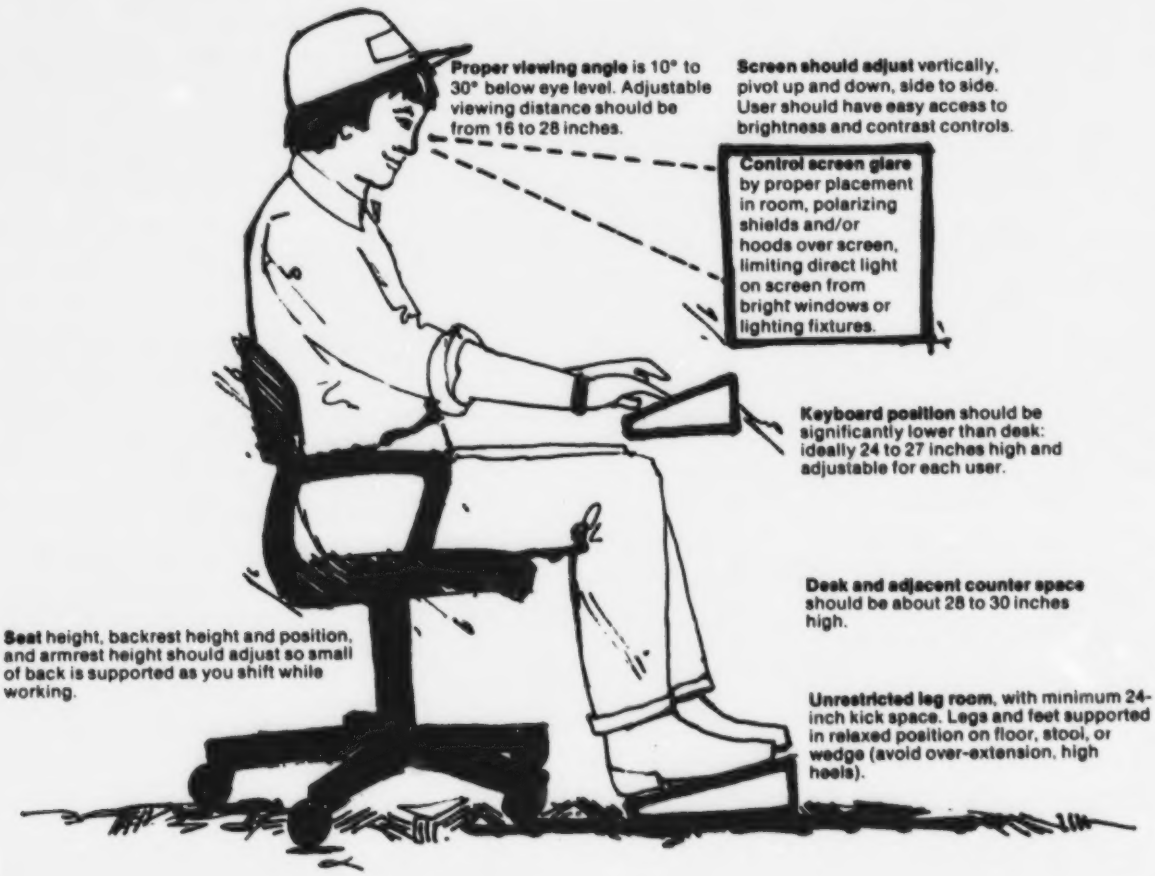
zone 2: Area your chair can easily glide to. Bulletin board, current files, pencil sharpener, business card file, typewriter, table extension for computer and printer.

zone 3: Area for low priority items you have to get up and move to. Paper punch, magazine and newsletter holders, bookcase, cupboards for extra office supplies, clock.

zone 4: Area for seldom used records that must be kept, such as an out-of-the-way closet or corner of the basement. However, such records should be secured to ensure privacy and protected to prevent damage or loss because of mice or mildew.

It also matters how various pieces of office equipment and furniture are set up in relation to each other. The most important relationship to consider is the one between your desk and chair. After all, if you're not comfortable sitting at your desk, you won't feel like doing record keeping. The office design industry has developed a set of guidelines that tell you the best way to set things up to avoid getting a stiff neck, back pain, eye strain and other related ailments. (See illustration below)

Your information needs are going to change over time. The methods you'll use for handling information will also change — witness the developments in computer technology for instance. Obviously, keeping your records useful for decision making will require some constant attention and annual overhauls. But the time and effort you invest will pay off in the form of better knowledge of your business affairs, increases in your net income and the best possible use of your resources.


Proper viewing angle is 10° to 30° below eye level. Adjustable viewing distance should be from 16 to 28 inches.
Screen should adjust vertically, pivot up and down, side to side. User should have easy access to brightness and contrast controls.
Control screen glare by proper placement in room, polarizing shields and/or hoods over screen, limiting direct light on screen from bright windows or lighting fixtures.
Keyboard position should be significantly lower than desk: ideally 24 to 27 inches high and adjustable for each user.
Desk and adjacent counter space should be about 28 to 30 inches high.
Seat height, backrest height and position, and armrest height should adjust so small of back is supported as you shift while working.
Unrestricted leg room, with minimum 24-inch kick space. Legs and feet supported in relaxed position on floor, stool, or wedge (avoid over-extension, high heels).

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APPENDIX

FIELD RECORD SHEET

FIELD NO: Browns Quarter YEAR: 1986

USE OF FIELD THIS YEAR ☒ CROP ☐ FALLOW ☐ FORAGE

COMMENTS: Wild Oat Problem Last Year
Insured @ 60% Medium price.

FALL INPUTS (Tillage, weed control)

ITEM/PRODUCT	EQUIPMENT USED	DATE OF WORK	FIELD CONDITIONS	RATE OF APPLICATION	COST
Tillage	Cultivator	Sept 26/85	Dry		225
Avadex	Cultivator	Oct 17/85	Little Trash Cover	1314/acre	225 - 9pp 2370 - chem

FERTILIZER: SOIL TEST RESULTS REPORT NO: 059979 SAMPLE NO: 3

AVAILABLE PLANT NUTRIENTS (lbs/acre): 8 N; 20 P_2O_5; 460 K_2O

SOIL pH 6.6

FERTILIZER:

APPLICATION	PRODUCT/ITEM	METHOD APPLIED	DATE APPLIED	RATE OF FERTILIZER	COST
BEFORE SEEDING	Anhydrous	Banded	Oct 19/85	80 lbs/A	2340
WITH SEED	11-55-0	Drilled	May 14/86	65 lbs/A	162C
OTHER FERTILIZATION	Manure	Spread	Oct 24/85	2T/A	-

SEED: FIELD SIZE 150 acres COST OF SEED CLEANING -

VARIETY Jackson - Cert. Seed RATE 1¼ B/A COST 750

SEED TREATMENT YES ☒ NO ☐ TYPE Vitavax COST 125

SPRING INPUTS (Tillage, weed control, insect control)

ITEM/PRODUCT	EQUIPMENT USED	DATE OF WORK	FIELD CONDITIONS	RATE OF APPLICATION	COST
Cultivate	Cultivator	May 8/86	Good - Good Moisture		225
"	Rod Weeder	May 10/86	Good		200
Seed	Drill	May 11/86	Good - Soil Cool		375
Diquat Herbicide	Harrows	May 14/86	Good - Firm Soil		150
Bactril M	Sprayer	June 12/86	Good Moisture	.4L/A	747

HARVEST

DATE OF SWATHING	DATE OF COMBINING	CROP DAMAGE	ESTIMATE % OF CROP DAMAGE	YIELD/ACRE	GRADE OF CROP	STORAGE SITE	COST
Sept 6/86	Sept 11/86	Nil		75 Bus/A	1 Feed	Bin #3	150

COMMENTS Good Wild Oat Control - Heavy Bushel Wt TOTAL INPUT COSTS 10552

FIELD RECORD SHEET

FIELD NO: _____ YEAR: _____

USE OF FIELD THIS YEAR ☐ CROP ☐ FALLOW ☐ FORAGE

COMMENTS: _____

FALL INPUTS (Tillage, weed control)

ITEM/PRODUCT	EQUIPMENT USED	DATE OF WORK	FIELD CONDITIONS	RATE OF APPLICATION	COST

FERTILIZER: SOIL TEST RESULTS REPORT NO: _____ SAMPLE NO: _____

AVAILABLE PLANT NUTRIENTS (lbs/acre) _____ N P_2O_5 K_2O

SOIL pH _____

FERTILIZER:

APPLICATION	PRODUCT/ITEM	METHOD APPLIED	DATE APPLIED	RATE OF FERTILIZER	COST
BEFORE SEEDING					
WITH SEED					
OTHER FERTILIZATION					

SEED: FIELD SIZE _____ COST OF SEED CLEANING _____

VARIETY _____ RATE _____ COST _____

SEED TREATMENT YES☐ NO☐ TYPE _____ COST _____

SPRING INPUTS (Tillage, weed control, insect control)

ITEM/PRODUCT	EQUIPMENT USED	DATE OF WORK	FIELD CONDITIONS	RATE OF APPLICATION	COST

HARVEST

DATE OF SWATHING	DATE OF COMBINING	CROP DAMAGE	ESTIMATE % OF CROP DAMAGE	YIELD/ACRE	GRADE OF CROP	STORAGE SITE	COST

COMMENTS _____ TOTAL INPUT COSTS _____

_____ TOTAL PRODUCTION _____

CROP INVENTORY CROP _____ YEAR _____

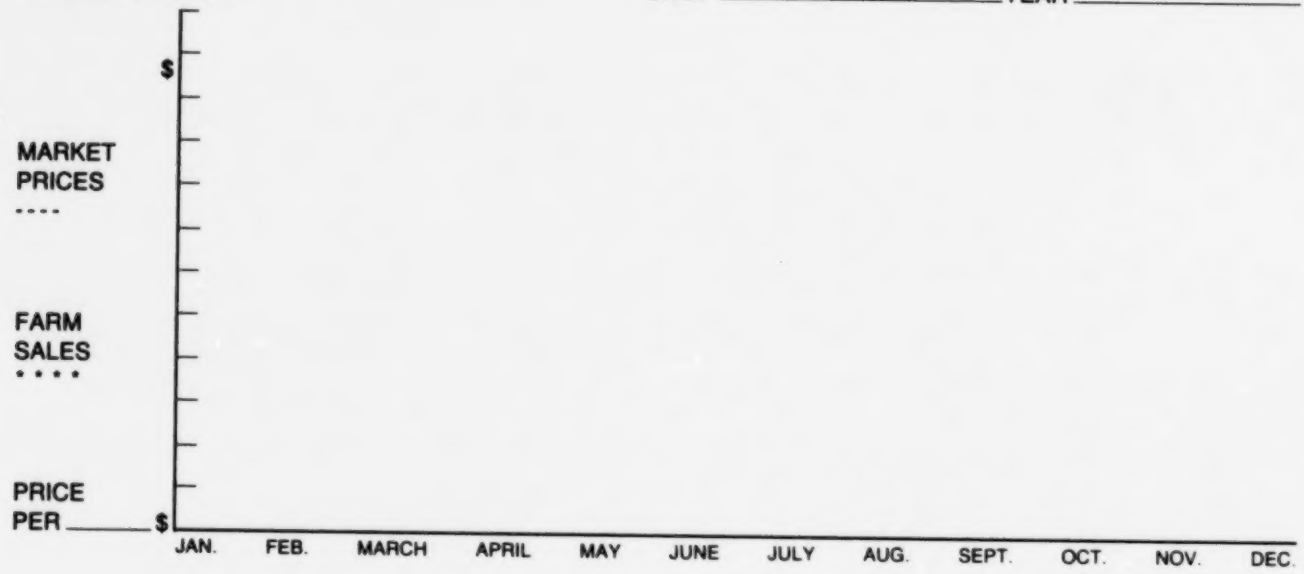
	BEGINNING INVENTORY	PRODUCTION	PURCHASES	TOTAL AVAILABLE	LIVESTOCK FEED	FARM SEED	SALES	ENDING INVENTORY
FALL								
WINTER								
SPRING								
SUMMER								

CROP INVENTORY CROP _____ YEAR _____

	BEGINNING INVENTORY	PRODUCTION	PURCHASES	TOTAL AVAILABLE	LIVESTOCK FEED	FARM SEED	SEEDS	ENDING INVENTORY
JANUARY								
FEBRUARY								
MARCH								
APRIL								
MAY								
JUNE								
JULY								
AUGUST								
SEPTEMBER								
OCTOBER								
NOVEMBER								
DECEMBER								

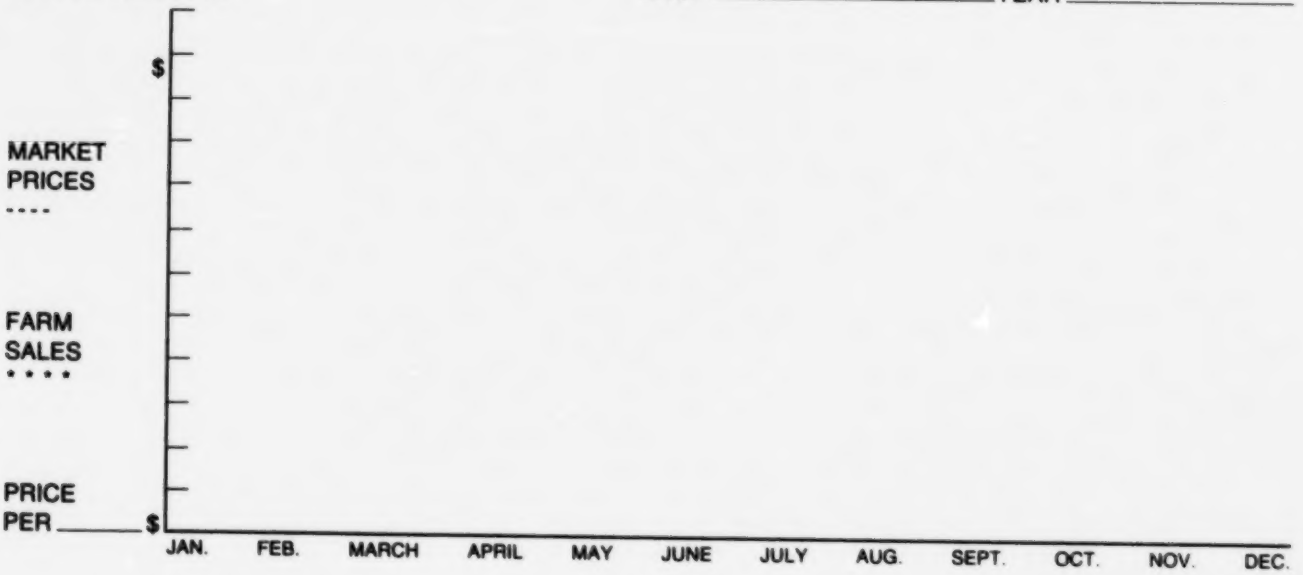
SALES RECORD

CROP _____ YEAR _____



SALES RECORD

CROP _____ YEAR _____



CROP INVENTORY CROP _____ YEAR _____

	BEGINNING INVENTORY	PRODUCTION	PURCHASES	TOTAL AVAILABLE	LIVESTOCK FEED	FARM SEED	SALES	ENDING INVENTORY
FALL								
WINTER								
SPRING								
SUMMER								

CROP INVENTORY CROP _____ YEAR _____

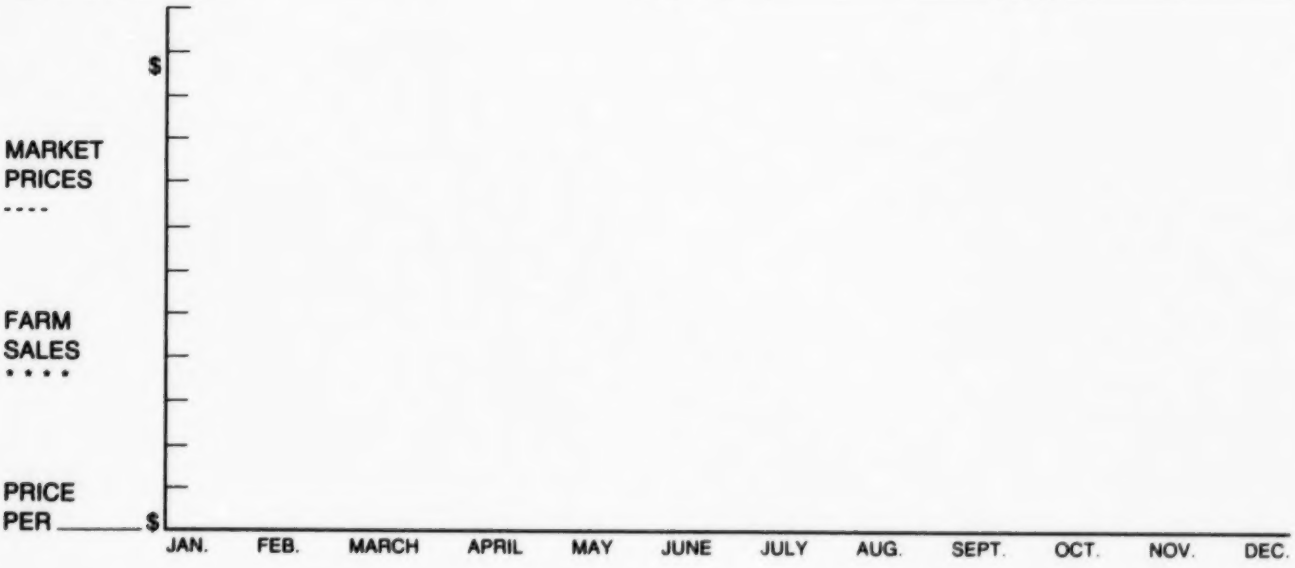
	BEGINNING INVENTORY	PRODUCTION	PURCHASES	TOTAL AVAILABLE	LIVESTOCK FEED	FARM SEED	SEEDS	ENDING INVENTORY
JANUARY								
FEBRUARY								
MARCH								
APRIL								
MAY								
JUNE								
JULY								
AUGUST								
SEPTEMBER								
OCTOBER								
NOVEMBER								
DECEMBER								

SALES RECORD

CROP _____ YEAR _____

SALES RECORD

CROP _____ YEAR _____



GUIDE FOR FARM AND HOME FILING SYSTEM

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES
(BLUE LABELS)

B1 FINANCIAL RECORDS

a) bills unpaid (attach partial payment receipt to these)
b) bills paid
   1) not recorded (this might be in account book)
   2) recorded (by month or categories or in same sequence as cheques)
c) cancelled cheques, bank statements
d) income receipts, deposit slips
   1) receipts not recorded (this might be in account book)
   2) receipts recorded (by month or by categories)
   3) deposit slips
e) account books
   1) farm account book, current
   2) farm account book, prior years
   3) depreciation records (if separate)
   4) enterprise account summary and feed and crop inventory
   5) hired labor accounts (withholding, etc.)
f) finance
   1) financial statements (net worth statements)
   2) borrowing and loan payment and agreement records
   3) loans and notes to be paid
   4) notes paid
g) forward plans
   1) annual budget
   2) overall farm plans
   3) specific project budgets
h) safety deposit box
   1) list of contents
   2) estate checklist (copy)

B2 INSURANCE

a) crop
b) property (buildings, machinery, etc.)
c) Workers' Compensation
d) liability land accident
e) farm owner's policy (life insurance)
f) health insurance
g) other

B3 LEGAL AGREEMENTS

a) leases and rental arrangements
b) rights-of-way – oil, gas, railway
c) other (road allowances, water ditches)
d) copy of will and burial wishes
e) copy of land title
f) copy of mortgages

B4 NON FARM INVESTMENTS AND RECORDS

a) Registered Retirement Savings Plan
b) list of other investments
c)
d)
e)

B5 TAXES

a) income tax returns and receipts
b) property taxes

B6 CORRESPONDENCE (BY CATEGORIES, COMPANIES OR INDIVIDUALS)

a)
b)
c)
d)
e)
f)
g)

B7 ORGANIZATIONS

a)
b)
c)
d)
e)
f)
h)

B8 OTHER

a)
b)
c)

BUSINESS REFERENCE SECTION

(GREEN LABELS)

R1 CROPS

a) crops
   1) wheat
   2) oats
   3) barley
   4) rapeseed
   5) forage & forage seed production
   6) specialty crops
   7) vegetable crops
   8) summerfallow
b) chemicals
   1) fertilizer—soil tests and fertilizer records
   2) herbicides and weed control
   3) insecticides
   4) fungicides
   5) rodent, bird and other pest control
   6) seed treatments and inoculants
c) irrigation and water records
   1) field map plans and records
   2) systems, design and operation
   3) water management (scheduling)
   4) drainage
   5) water rates, irrigation regulations and correspondence
d) government programs and regulations
e) field records and yields
   1) field record book (moisture, yield, field treatments)
   2) field map plans
f) price and marketing information
g) other

(Red Labels)

R2 LIVESTOCK

a) Beef-cow herd
   1) general
   2) management & husbandry
   3) breeds and breeding records
   4) registration papers
   5) production records
   6) feeding programs
   7) feeds, feed additives and feed test reports
   8) health & veterinary records
   9) regulations
   10) government programs
   11) price & market information
b) hogs (with above sub-headings
c) feeder cattle (with above sub-headings
d) dairy (with above sub-headings)
e) sheep (with above sub-headings)
f) poultry (with above sub headings)
g) horses
h) other livestock

(Orange Labels)

R3 BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS
- a) references
- b) plans

R4 MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT
- a) references and guarantees
- b) special cost records
  - 1) auto
  - 2) tractor
  - 3) truck
  - 4) CB radio
  - 5) other
- c) licenses
- d) price lists and catalogues
- e) operating manuals
  - 1) mechanical
  - 2) electrical
  - 3) welding
  - 4) construction

R5 ENERGY REFERENCES
- a) electricity
- b) oil
- c) gas
- d) diesel
- e) propane
- f) solar

R6 WATER SOURCE SYSTEMS
- a) domestic
- b) livestock

R7 MANAGEMENT - PLANNING, REFERENCES, STUDIES
- a) general—cost and return studies etc.
- b) financial
- c) insurance
- d) labor relations and past employee records
- e) leases
- f) property transfer
- g) taxes—changes, strategies
- h) estate plans
- i)
- j)

R8 MARKETING AND OUTLOOK
- a) current situation reports
- b) annual outlook statements
- c) other
- d)

R9 POLICY, PUBLIC
- a) agriculture
- b) local and provincial
- c) federal
- d) international

R10 SUPPLY CATALOGUES

R11 MISCELLANEOUS
- a) newsletters
- b) periodicals
- c) hunting licenses, shooting permits
- d) weather information
- e) favorite jokes, newspaper clippings, ideas

HOME ACTIVITIES - Records

(Yellow Labels)

H1 FINANCIAL RECORDS

a) bills unpaid
b) bills paid (by month or categories or in same sequence as cheques)
c) cancelled cheques, bank statements
d) income receipts, deposit slips
e) record books
f) financial papers (mortgage, loans)
g) taxes
h) insurance
i) household inventory
j) financial & family security plans

1) overall budget & money plans
2) estate checklist (copy)
3) will and burial wishes (copy or where kept)
4) safety deposit box—list of contents

H2 FAMILY LIVING RECORDS

a) health records
b) education records and report cards
c) employment records
d) vacation records and plans
e) family history records
f) birth, marriage, baptism certificates

H3 PERSONAL RECORDS

a) address/Christmas card list
b) correspondence
1) personal
2) family & household business
c) birthdays
d) gifts
e) photographs
f)
g)

H4 ORGANIZATIONS

a) church
b) women's
1)
2)
3)
c) 4-H
d) sports (hockey, swimming, figure skating)
e) scouts and guides
f) community
g)

HOME ACTIVITIES - References

H5 HOME MANAGEMENT

a) furnishings and equipment
1) warranties instruction manuals
2) service records on appliances
3) buying guides
b) house care & maintenance references
c) energy conservation references
d) water analysis tests & treatments

H6 HOME

a) house plans, remodelling/building plans
b) interior decoration references
c)

H7 HORTICULTURE — Lawn and Garden References, Plans Catalogues

H8 CLOTHING

a) references (economics, wardrobe planning)
b) patterns
c) construction

H9 LAUNDRY (Methods and Stain Removal)

H10 CRAFTS AND HOBBIES

a) references
b)
c)

H11 CHILD CARE

a) references
b) safety, first aid, poison control

H12 FOOD AND NUTRITION

a) nutrition requirements, food costs, meal planning
b) food recipes

H14 MISCELLANEOUS

a) newspaper clips, ideas

AGDEX FILING SYSTEM

GENERAL SECTION - 000

000 Agrelature
010 Agricultural Education
020 Agricultural Research
030 Agricultural Agencies
040 Governmental Agencies
050 Farm Organizations
060 Conservation
070 Weather & Climate
080 Health & Safety
090 Environmental

FIELD CROP PRODUCTION - 100

100 Field Crops
110 Grain Crops
120 Forage Crops
130 Pastures
140 Oil & Seed Crops
150 Fiber Crops
160 Roots & Tubers
170 Sugar Crops
180 Specialty Crops
190 Open

HORTICULTURE - 200

200 Horticultural Crops
210 Tree Fruits
220 Citrus & Tropical Fruits
230 Small Fruits
240 Nut Crop
250 Vegetables
260 Specialties
270 Ornamentals
280 Flowers
290 Open

PESTS, DISEASES, WEEDS - 600

600 Pests - General
610 Entomology
620 Plant Insects
630 Plant Pathology
640 Weeds
650 Animal Parasites
660 Livestock Diseases
670 Farm & Household Pests
680 Rodents & Pests
690 Open

FORESTRY - 300

300 General
310 Management
320 Silviculture
330 Species
340 Silvics
350 Harvesting
360 Conservation
370 Processing
380 Products
390 Open

ANIMAL SCIENCE - 400

400 Livestock
410 Dairy
420 Beef Cattle
430 Sheep
440 Swine
450 Poultry
460 Horses
470 Small Animals & Pets
480 Wildlife
490 Open

SOILS - 500

500 Soils - General
510 Soil Management
520 Soil Classification
530 Soil Fertility
540 Fertilizers
550 Water & Drainage
560 Irrigation
570 Conservation
580 Reclamation
590 Open

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS - 800

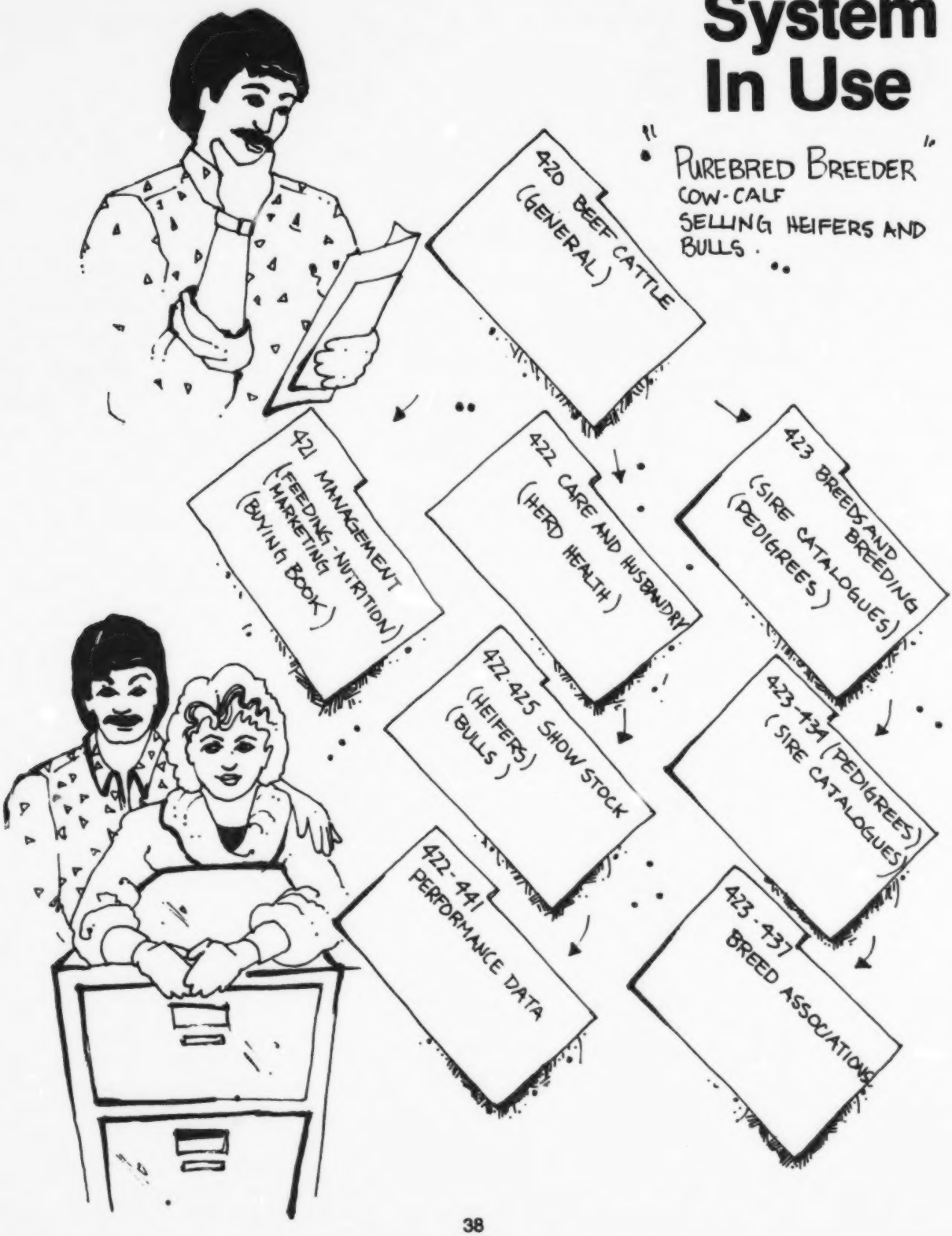
800 Economics General
810 Farm Management
820 Production Economics
830 Agri-Business
840 Marketing
850 Agricultural Statistics
860 Outlook
870 Farm Policy
880 Rural Sociology
890 Open

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING - 700

700 Engineering
710 Farm Buildings
720 Livestock Buildings & Equipment
730 Crop Buildings & Equipment
740 Field Machinery
750 Soil & Water Engineering
760 Farm Power
770 Electricity
780 Shop & Mechanics
790 Open

Note: Contact your district agriculturalist for more information on this filing system.

Agdex System In Use


PUREBRED BREEDER
COW-CALF
SELLING HEIFERS AND BULLS
420 BEEF CATTLE (GENERAL)
421 MANAGEMENT (FEEDING - NUTRITION) (MARKETING) (BUYING BOOK)
422 CARE AND HUSBANDRY (HERD HEALTH)
423 BREEDS AND BREEDING (SIRE CATALOGUES) (PEDIGREES)
422-425 SHOW STOCK (HEIFERS) (BULLS)
423-431 (PEDIGREES) (SIRE CATALOGUES)
422-441 PERFORMANCE DATA
423-437 BREED ASSOCIATIONS

AGDEX

• HOW DETAILED?
• WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP?
• HOW CAN THIS MATERIAL BE FILED FOR EASY ACCESS?
420 - BEEF CATTLE (GENERAL)
STRICTLY COW-CALF COMMERCIAL HERD
421 COW-CALF (MARKETING BUYING AND SELLING)
422 COW-CALF (HERD HEALTH)
424 COW-CALF (IMPROVEMENT BREEDING PERFORMANCE DATA)
425 - COW-CALF (NUTRITION AND FEEDING)
ONLY 4 FILES THAT I CAN EXPAND IF NEED BE!